1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.
18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.
19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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of the kind known as *nnákata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. Influential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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5. COUNTERMEASURES

Neither the evidence which should precede the countermeasures nor these themselves are uniform or rigidly laid down; rather, there are a number of alternative procedures, employed as chance and expediency may dictate. One can, to begin with, rely on the official 'witchfinder', the *Lelu* or *Sagi*. Then there is that incontrovertible 'proof', the naming of the witch by the victim in dream or delirium, which must occur five times to be truly conclusive; but this testimony is not always applicable nor does one always wait for it. Nor yet does proof by ordeal seem indispensable, although the Nupe know two such methods. The first consists in the application of the snake-bite medicine *wasa* mentioned before, which the accused is made to drink, the belief being that a true witch would be killed by a snake. The second ordeal is administered by the masked members of the *ndakó gboyá* society, who would take the suspect woman into the bush and make her scratch the ground with her finger-nails; if after a time (left to the discretion of the inquisitors) blood comes out from under her finger-nails, this proves her to be a witch. No informant could remember a concrete case when the first ordeal was applied; while the second disappeared with the official ban on the *ndakó gboyá*.

A witch convicted by one or the other method might be warned by the village chief, perhaps also fined, and if possible ordered to repair the harm she had done; an unrepentant witch was formerly flogged and driven from the village. Several informants maintained that a witch was never killed, since this would bring the revenge of all other witches upon the community; but according to others a dangerous witch was denounced to the *Etsu* Nupe, who would hand her over to his executioners. Above all, there are various magic means whereby witches are killed or at least frightened and subdued, though several of these have disappeared in most of Nupe country and are today known from hearsay only. One such method appears to have employed the bull-roarer (called *vúgu-vúgu*;[1] another consisted in a dance called *kútúkpa* (a word denoting the clanging noise made by a galloping horse), which is said to have afflicted witches watching it with a swollen throat, so that they could not swallow or eat and must die of hunger.[2] Only

[1] I met with an amusing 'secularized' version of the bull-roarer in Katcha, where the nightwatchman of the Niger Company used it to frighten off burglars.

[2] This method, too, has in a sense been secularized. For the steps and passes of the dance and the fantastic dress worn by the dancers have been preserved in another dance, called *sorogi* (a species of tortoise), which is meant for entertainment only and is frequently performed by groups of young men touring the country after the end of the farming season.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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two deadly weapons against witches have survived. The first is private as well as casual, and consists in the anti-witchcraft *cigbe* which individuals can acquire; the second, public and ritualized, lies in the *ndakó gboyá* cult and in the activities of the society of that name. In Nupe eyes, it is the most powerful weapon of its kind, and since its inception, probably several generations ago, it seems to have overshadowed all other anti-witchcraft measures.

As we know, the cult has merged with the main ritual of Nupe, the *gunnu*, where the *ndakó gboyá* masks appear during the vigil in the bush, to frighten novices, warn the youths to obey their elders, and whip offenders.[1] If in this context the apparition of *ndakó gboyá* is suggestively called 'the policeman of the *gunnu*'; the 'police' duties extend to witchcraft also; for the masks reappear later, during the public phase of the ceremonial, to frighten all women, to discourage would-be witches, and to weaken, by their very presence, the evil powers of witchcraft. If the *ndakó gboyá* is thus thought of as a deterrent and preventive, it may also assume the character of punishment proper; for the masks are expected to drag the suspects into the bush, subject them to the ordeal described before, and kill the 'proved' witch—unless she pays a heavy ransom, which loophole, as we shall see, has far-reaching consequences.

But this is only the combination of two distinct cults. It is well understood that the peculiar powers of the *gunnu* do not depend on this addition to its ceremonial, customary though it had become. And as each cult has its own specific aims, so it can, at least on occasion, be performed independently. Nor have the officiants of the *ndakó gboyá* anything to do with the officiants or the priest of the *gunnu*. Normally, in fact, the former are strangers in the village where they perform, being members of a 'secret' society represented only in a few localities and called in specially for the occasion. Furthermore, in the north and east of Nupe, where this society never established its influence, the combination of the two cults is unknown. It is true, however, that in the rest of the country popular opinion, unaware of the esoteric organization of the *ndakó gboyá*, often confuses the two.[2] It is possible that this view was encouraged by the society itself since it kept that organization in the dark. A line in the *gunnu* songs, for example, seems cleverly designed to obscure by its ambiguous meaning the relationship between the two cults. It reads—'*gunnukó u yi Gboyá*', which may mean either 'the *gunnu* priest calls the *Gboyá*'

[1] See above, p. 83.

[2] This applies especially to foreigners. Thus the Yoruba neighbours of the Nupe call the *ndakó gboyá* cult *igunnu*.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [984 672]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [935] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 696 [767]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [842] 586